

Utah Heritage Traditions: Program Description (D R A F T)

(updated 7-8-16)

Many Utah communities have history-based celebrations or events that, over time, have become unique Utah traditions. These traditions not only celebrate the past, they help remind us who we are and how our communities became what they are today. Collectively, heritage traditions from throughout the state create a mosaic of Utah's unique history and character.

Though most community traditions are geographically based (cities, towns, regions, distinct urban or rural districts, etc.), some may be tied to purpose-based organizations, formal or informal, and regional or statewide in scope. Regardless of the type of community sponsoring the event, it is essential that the event itself be open to the public, creating an opportunity for an intermingling of community residents/members and the broader public.

The purpose of the Utah Heritage Traditions program is to formally recognize unique celebrations and events as community and state assets. Benefits of designation include the following:

- *Community pride*: It recognizes a unique aspect of a community's history that they are already celebrating, but places it in the spotlight on a larger stage.
- *Historical awareness*: State recognition of community events catches the attention of many residents/members who may not have recognized or paid much attention to the historical underpinnings of the celebration.
- *Economic development*: Many events stimulate local economies, so enhanced recognition often translates into increased financial success for the event itself and local businesses.
- *Tourism*: The media and the tourism industry like to promote distinctive, successful events, especially those with a unique historical twist. Heritage Tradition designation can serve as "seal of approval" that an event is exceptional.

Designation Criteria

In order to qualify for designation as a Utah Heritage Tradition, a local, regional, or statewide event or celebration must meet all of the following criteria:

- A. Currently active and at least 50 consecutive years of operation* (hardship exceptions may be allowed for short breaks—please describe and explain).
- B. Closely associated with a unique, historical aspect of the community. This should be something that has helped shape the community's identity and character. Events should not be just a local expression of a widely celebrated holiday or routine event that other communities may have (e.g. 4th of July celebration, county fair, etc.).
- C. A demonstrated track record of success. Indicators may include the number of attendees, amount of revenue generated, numbers and types of supporting organizations, number of volunteers, the extent and quality of media coverage, etc.
- D. A variety of community-based activities for a broad spectrum of the public, emphasizing participation and engagement beyond just viewing showcase performances.
- E. Adds to the livability and identity of the community and state by emphasizing positive activities such as volunteerism, economic development, tourism, public improvement projects, cross-cultural interactions, and community preservation.
- F. May have either free or paid admission, but no exclusionary requirements based on age, race, religion, gender, family affiliation, ethnicity, etc.

**In order to encourage and foster more designations, events of substantial duration that do not yet meet the 50-year mark for longevity may apply for an "up and coming" or "tradition in the making" status if they meet the other criteria.*

